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CABINET

THE QUEEN'S SPEECH ON THE OPENING OF  
PARLIAMENT

Memorandum by the Secretary of State for the  
Home Department

1. I attach a draft for The Queen's Speech on the Opening of Parliament in the form in which it has been agreed by The Queen's Speeches and Future Legislation Committee (QL).
2. The draft takes our Manifesto as its starting point and assumes a session running until July or October 1980. It concentrates on the main items in the programme on which we can expect to make progress in a session of that length, but with due regard to the constraints on public expenditure. It also refers to some important items of legislation, not mentioned in the Manifesto, which QL considered should be introduced during the first session; and to certain other major policy issues, for example in the fields of defence and foreign relations, on which we shall be expected to state our position.
3. I am grateful to those of our colleagues who have contributed to the draft, including departmental Ministers who are not members of QL. We have adopted their suggestions so far as we felt able to do so; where we have not, it has usually been because they implied commitments to public expenditure which we did not consider we could justify at this stage, or on grounds of length. Where appropriate, points not included in the Speech can of course be made during the Debate on the Address.
4. There are three matters which I should draw to the attention of my colleagues as needing confirmation of our policy. They are:-
  - a. Overseas aid (page 2, lines 16-17), on which we should establish whether our policy is to take a new direction which should be reflected in the Speech.
  - b. The future of the Price Commission (page 3, lines 10-12) in the light of the Secretary of State for Trade's minute to the Prime Minister of 7 May; and

c. Scotland and Wales (page 4, lines 10-16). Are the Cabinet satisfied with what is said about Scotland and Wales, and the comparisons which are likely to be made between the two paragraphs?

5. Subject to the resolution of these three points, I invite my colleagues to approve the draft attached to this memorandum.

W. W.

Home Office

8 May 1979

QUEEN'S SPEECH ON THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons

I look forward with great pleasure to receiving the President of Kenya on a State Visit in June and to paying State Visits to Denmark this month and to Tanzania, Malawi, Botswana and Zambia in July. I also look forward to being present on the occasion of the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Lusaka at the beginning of August.

My Government will take steps to improve the security of the nation and to strengthen our contribution to the North Atlantic Alliance on which our defences are based. They will immediately restore and thereafter maintain the pay of servicemen at the levels of their civilian counterparts. They will maintain the effectiveness of Britain's nuclear deterrent. At the same time they will seek friendly and constructive relations with the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe, as well as with China.

They will work to bring the negotiations for a comprehensive nuclear test ban to a successful conclusion, and to achieve progress in the mutual and balanced force reductions in Central Europe.

My Government affirm their strong commitment to the European Community. They intend to play a full and constructive part in its further development and enlargement, and in the co-ordination of the foreign policies of Member States. They will seek to make significant improvements to the Common Agricultural Policy in the interests both of the United Kingdom and of the community as a whole, and they will

work for an agreement on a Common Fisheries Policy which takes account of the need to conserve stocks and the interests of our fishermen. They will press for a fairer pattern of budgetary and resource transfers in the European Economic Community. They welcome the  
5 development of the European Monetary System and will consider afresh the question of the participation of the United Kingdom in its various aspects.

My Government confirm their commitment to the Commonwealth and the United Nations. They will play an active part in the peaceful and  
10 just settlements of disputes between nations.

Every effort will be made to end the conflict in Rhodesia and to bring about a lasting settlement based on the democratic wishes of the people of that country.

My Government will fully co-operate in endeavours to achieve a just  
15 and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East and to bring peace to all the peoples of the region.

[They will undertake an effective programme of trade with, and aid to, the developing nations.]

Members of the House of Commons

20 Estimates for the public service will be laid before you.

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons

My Government will give priority in economic policy to controlling inflation through the pursuit of firm monetary and fiscal policies.

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By reducing the burden of direct taxation and restricting the claims of the public sector on the nation's resources they will start to restore incentives, encourage efficiency and create a climate in which commerce and industry can flourish. In this way they will lay a secure basis for investment, productivity and increased employment.

My Government intend to achieve a fair balance between the rights and duties of the trade union movement. They will encourage responsible pay bargaining and the wider participation of the great majority of members in the affairs of their unions. Legislation will be brought before you at the earliest opportunity to amend the law on picketing and the closed shop, and to provide for postal ballots.

My Government will publish proposals for promoting more effective competition and fair pricing policies. [A measure will be introduced to amend legislation relating to the Price Commission.]

Proposals will be brought forward to amend the Industry Act 1975 and to restrict the activities of the National Enterprise Board. Other proposals will reduce the extent of public ownership by providing opportunities for members of the public and employees to participate through the purchase of shares.

My Government will stimulate the development of small businesses on which the creation of new jobs so heavily depends. Means will be sought to reduce the administrative burdens which are placed upon them, and they will also benefit from my Government's general policies on taxation, industrial relations and related employment legislation.

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Legislation will be introduced to amend company law.

My Ministers will seek to secure that United Kingdom agriculture and the food-processing and distributive industries have the opportunities to compete on fair terms and to make their full contribution to the economy.

In Northern Ireland, my Government will strive to restore peace and security and to promote the social and economic welfare of the Province. They will seek an acceptable way of restoring to the people of Northern Ireland more control over their own affairs.

You will be invited to approve the repeal of the Scotland Act 1978, and all-Party discussions will be held about the devolution of power from Westminster. Measures will be introduced to make reforms to criminal procedure and criminal justice in Scotland.

My Ministers [will propose the repeal of the Wales Act 1978. They] will give active support to the maintenance of the Welsh language and will seek an early start with Welsh broadcasting on the fourth television channel.

My Government are committed to reinforcing respect for the law in all parts of the United Kingdom. They will give full support to the police service and will take steps to ensure that the law is enforced more effectively. They will improve and strengthen the prison system and look forward to receiving the recommendations of the Committee of Inquiry

into the Prison Services in the United Kingdom. Legislative proposals will be brought forward to strengthen the powers of the courts in England and Wales in relation to young offenders and juveniles.

Members of the House of Commons will be given an early opportunity to discuss and amend their procedures, particularly as they relate to their scrutiny of the work of Government Departments.

My Government will introduce measures on housing which will include provisions for local authority and new town tenants to buy their homes, and which will give new rights and responsibilities to council tenants under a Tenants' Charter. Proposals will also be laid before you for encouraging short-term private lettings.

Legislation will be introduced to promote greater efficiency in local government, including regulation of the activities of local authority direct labour organisations.

The quality of education will be maintained and improved. A Bill will be introduced to remove the compulsion on local authorities in England and Wales to re-organise their schools on comprehensive lines and to restore their freedom to take up places at independent schools. Legislative provision will be made to ensure that parents' wishes are taken into account when children are allocated to schools and that there is a local appeals system. Proposals will be put forward for providing assistance to less well off parents whose children would benefit from attendance at certain non-maintained schools.

My Government will continue to support the arts and will bring forward proposals to safeguard our national heritage of historic buildings and artistic treasures.

5 Pensions, war pensions and other social security benefits will be increased in November, and legislation will be introduced to provide for the payment of a Christmas bonus to pensioners. Ways will be sought to simplify the operations of the social security system.

10 My Ministers will work to improve the use of resources in the National Health Service and its administration, in the light of the report to be made by the Royal Commission. They will make proposals to enable those who wish to make use of the resources of private medicine to do so.

Measures will be introduced to amend the law on nationality and to make changes in the control of immigration.

15 Proposals will be brought before you for the future of broadcasting. A Bill will be introduced to extend the life of the Independent Broadcasting Authority, which will be given responsibility (subject to strict safeguards) for the fourth television channel.

20 A measure will be introduced to replace the provisions of section 2 of the Official Secrets Act 1911 with provisions appropriate to the present time.

A Bill will be brought forward to amend the law of contempt of court.



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My Ministers will take steps to improve the quality of the administration of justice and to promote reform of the general law.

Other measures will be laid before you.

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons

5 I pray that the blessing of Almighty God may rest upon your counsels.

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